

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

19

9 June 1949

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM NO. 184

SUBJECT: CIA Comment on Draft Estimate of Soviet Capabilities in the Event of a War Commencing 1 January 1957

1. General Comment.

Subject estimate is considered too brief and superficial to present an accurate picture of probable conditions on 1 January 1957. It is considered unrealistic to attempt an estimate of Soviet capabilities in the event of war eight years hence in such brief and definitive form. Furthermore, the estimate appears to neglect possible and probable developments in both East and West over the intervening period.

Economic capabilities of the entire Soviet Bloc in 1957 have not been considered adequately. Since economic considerations are of prime importance in determining future Soviet capabilities in the event of war, these considerations should receive more exhaustive treatment. There is too often the tendency to gloss over the economic situation with vague and generalized statements. It is just as important to estimate the ability of the Soviet Bloc to produce tanks, tractors, jet planes, aviation gas, grain, and the like under prolonged war conditions as it is to estimate the numbers of tanks and planes at the beginning of the war.

2. Specific Comments.

In view of the limited time available for review of subject paper,

Note: This memorandum has not been coordinated with the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Army, Navy, and the Air Force.

NO CHANGE in Class. ☐

DECLASSIFIED

CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C

DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77

no attempt has been made to submit recommended substitutions on all portions of the paper commented on. The following specific comments have been prepared for consideration and further detailed comment is reserved.

a. Page 2, para 1 (d).

It is suggested that the "Development of Western Union" either be omitted or placed last on the list of US measures. It is believed that the development of the Atlantic Pact and the prospect of the Military Aid Program have overtaken and surpassed in importance the question of Western Union.

b. Pages 2 and 3, paras. e (a) and (b).

No mention is made of the problem of nationalist deviation from Soviet domination of world Communism as currently exemplified by Tito's Yugoslavia. The problem of Satellite nationalism rebelling against Soviet imperialism will probably continue to beset the Soviet Union eight years hence. Tito is the outward manifestation of a problem that now faces and will continue to face the Kremlin in the foreseeable future throughout the Satellites. Furthermore, no consideration is given to the increasing political and economic problems facing the Soviet Union in controlling the Satellite states over an extended period of time.

c. Pages 3 and 4, para. (2) (a) i.

The morale of the Soviet people as a decisive consideration is not solely dependent upon the military position of the USSR. While a military defeat appears the most likely condition under which morale would play an important part, it is also conceivable that morale could become

decisive under other circumstances, such as in a struggle for power following the death of Stalin. The expression of popular dissatisfaction in the form of effective resistance or uprisings is directly related to the status of the organs of State control. If for any reason, military or otherwise, these controls become impaired seriously enough to lessen or obviate the possibility of reprisal, effective resistance or uprisings could then be expected.

d. Page 6, para. iv.

Judging from World War II, the mobilization of "native Russian patriotism behind a Soviet war effort" depends less on governmental stimulants than on possible reaction to a ruthless invader such as Hitler.

e. Page 8, para. d.

It is suggested that this paragraph be re-worded as follows: "Furthermore, the forces of resistance within the Soviet orbit would only effectively assert themselves when the effectiveness of the organs of State control were impaired seriously enough to permit organization without discovery and action without reprisal. Guidance and material support from the Allies would be helpful."

f. Page 8, para. 2 a (1).

The statement "...it (the USSR) is seriously deficient in natural rubber, tropical products, industrial diamonds, cobalt, tin, lead, copper and other minerals" refers to the current situation and not to the 1957 situation. It is true that the USSR and Satellites have deficiencies in tin, tungsten, copper, lead, and, to a lesser extent, cobalt. In the case of tin and tungsten, China (if properly exploited) could supply Soviet

needs. In the case of copper and lead, Yugoslavia could largely make up this deficiency (of course, assuming either Soviet control over Yugoslavia or favorable trade between the two countries). Unless the USSR and Satellites are able to export and stockpile considerable quantities of these metals in short supply, the Bloc will be deficient in 1957.

The statement "...the USSR has very limited POL refining capacity, and this, in view of its increasing mechanization, is a significant weakness" again refers to the current situation and in itself is considered erroneous since there is an estimated 40 percent refining capacity over crude oil production.

g. ~~Page 3. para. 2. a. (2) (a).~~

It is suggested that the first two sentences read as follows: "Following on the present development of the basic heavy industries, it is expected that the end of the next Five Year Plan will see some expansion of the Soviet manufacturing industries with consequent increase in the capacity for armament manufacture if the USSR and Satellites are permitted to import

Substantially what machinery and equipment are required. There will be no expansion if western trade restrictions are continued and tightened through the stated period. A brake on the speed of USSR development will remain the capacity of the Soviet transport system, but in 1957 the system will be relatively stronger than in 1949."

h. ~~Page 3. para. (3) (a).~~

The estimated labor force of over 80,000,000 loses its value since there is no breakdown of agricultural and non-agricultural labor forces. It is estimated that the total labor force on 1 January 1957 will

be 90,000,000 which includes an agricultural force of 49,000,000 and a non-agricultural force of 41,000,000.

1. Pages 9 and 10. para. (4).

It is suggested that the word "will" replace the word "may" in the sentence "In cases, such as natural rubber and industrial diamonds where her (USSR) productive capacity may fall short of her war requirements...."

It is further suggested that the last sentence in this paragraph read as follows: "The Satellites will continue to require high-grade iron ore from Sweden, but if this were denied to them, the Soviet Union would be able to make up this deficiency with ore of a somewhat lower grade."

1. Page 10. para. (5) (a).

It is suggested that the second sentence read as follows: "Although the Soviets have the capability to develop a strong railroad system, it will be insufficient to meet all the needs of the greatly increased traffic and there will continue to be a shortage of locomotives and freight cars."

k. Page 10. para. (5) (b).

It is suggested that the last sentence read as follows: "Developments of the local road system is also likely to have been considerable, but there will have been no change in the basic function of motor transport which is to provide cartage service."

1. Page 11. para. (5) (a).

It is suggested that the first sentence be deleted and that the word "therefore" in the second sentence be deleted.

II. Page 12. para. (7). second line.

It is suggested that the word "equipment" follow the words "electric power."